

PRESS RELEASE

Congressman John Conyers, Jr.

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CONYERS ON MCCAIN GUN SHOW BILL:

“It looks like the NRA used the gun show bill that passed the Senate last year as target practice,” Lists seven deadly loopholes

Today, Congressman John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee and Dean of the Congressional Black Caucus, reacted to the McCain gun show draft. Conyers led Democratic efforts to reach bipartisan consensus on this issue in the 106th Congress. Conyers issued the following statement:

“My first reaction to this loophole-ridden draft is that it looks like the NRA used the gun show bill that passed the Senate last year as target practice. I had high hopes when I heard of efforts to craft a bipartisan gun show bill but, unfortunately, this bill has at least seven deadly loopholes:

1. **The Eric Rudolph Loophole** -- The bill would weaken the Brady law by shortening background checks to 24 hours and thereby allow more than 2,200 additional felons, fugitives and stalkers to purchase guns in an 18 month period. The bill would allow a state to shorten background checking time to 24 hours if the state had 95% of *potentially* disqualifying information online, but doesn't require that states have any finalized information needed to quickly complete a background check and determine whether a person is prohibited from possessing a gun.

2. **The John Hinckley, Jr. Loophole** -- The bill would further compound the problem of shortening the time for background checks by allowing states to limit the type of records to be checked. The bill would allow states to limit records to be searched to “disposition information,” which may exclude mental health records and restraining orders, and thereby allow stalkers and the mentally ill to evade background checks.

3. The Illegal Gun Trafficker Loophole – The bill resurrects the NRA-backed Craig Amendment’s scheme to allow a new, fly by night entity known as a special event licensee empowered to conduct the all important background checks. These checkers would not even be required to undergo a background check themselves. This is an invitation for illegal gun traffickers to set up their own background checkers and use those checkers as fronts to fraudulently purchase weapons.

4. The Roving Vendor Loophole – The bill would allow a gun trafficker to walk into a gun show and sell weapons with no record of their existence, simply because the vendor was not scheduled in advance as a gun show seller.

5. The David Koresh Let’s Step Outside Loophole – The bill would allow a gun seller to offer to sell a gun at a gun show, and the purchaser to evade background check requirements simply by avoiding making a “formal commitment” to purchase the gun while in the gun show and completing the transaction outside.

6. The Charles Manson Loophole – While current law requires that a background check consider all criminal records, this bill would allow states to disregard criminal convictions that are more than 30 years old. This could result in very dangerous criminals with old convictions, like Charles Manson, purchasing guns.

7. The Uzi Tupperware Party Loophole -- Without requiring any license to deal guns, this bill would create an unprecedented exemption that would allow a gun trafficker to sell thousands of guns from his home without conducting any background checks.

I want to close the gun show loophole. Unfortunately, this bill is one step forward and seven steps back. After gun safety advocates picked up seats in both the House and the Senate and the NRA lost nearly every race it targeted, I am puzzled as to why we would wave the white flag in the fight against gun violence by supporting this loophole-ridden bill.”